Existing Tanks

Registration Prerequisite to the effective control of underground storage tanks is the development and maintenance of an inventory of existing tanks. Fourteen of the 15 towns on Cape Cod (Barnstable County, Massachusetts) have adopted local by-laws requiring registration of all underground gasoline, fuel, or chemical storage systems. Most by-laws, which were adapted from model regulations prepared by the Cape Cod Planning and Economic Development Commission, exclude residential fuel oil tanks from this requirement. Kansas has required registration of underground tanks since 1975.

Although New York State has a comprehensive bulk storage law, Nassau and Suffolk counties (Long Island) have adopted county health ordinances that are more restrictive regarding underground storage of petroleum products and other chemicals. Suffolk County's ordinance (Article 7, Suffolk County Sanitary Code) requires owners/operators of underground tanks to obtain permits, renewable every five years, from the Department of Health Services. Tanks smaller than 1100 gallons that are used to store fuel oil, diesel oil, kerosene, or lubricating oil prior to use (not resale) are exempted.

Dade County, Florida, goes a step further by requiring owners of existing chemical tanks to obtain permits, which are renewable annually. The county reserves the right at its discretion to add conditions to the permit at time of renewal, such as provision of sampling points and monitoring wells.

Inspection One approach used to identify existing tanks that are leaking is through a periodic inventory reconciliation and physical inspection program. The Cape Cod towns require annual or semiannual inventory verification and conduct annual physical inspections and tests of all registered tanks at least 15 years of age or older. Suffolk County, Long Island, inspects existing tanks on a biennial basis for tanks 20 or more years old and every 4 years for tanks less than 10 years old. The county reports that the incidence of leaking tanks has fallen from 15 percent of all tanks inspected in 1981 to 2 percent in 1984.

Prohibitions Kansas prohibits underground or at-grade storage of toxic and hazardous waste materials everywhere in the state. Dade County, Florida, does not permit tanks without secondary containment in designated wellfield areas and prohibits use of unprotected steel tanks (without cath-odic protection, or secondary containment) everywhere in the county.

The Cape Cod towns require tanks not in conformance with current standards to be removed by a set date. Suffolk County, Long Island, requires all